



March “Nutrition Connection” Tips to Spring Clean Your Diet

Spring is finally here! As you pack up your winter wardrobe for springtime attire, hopefully those summer shorts fit just as well as they did last year! However, if you find they are a bit more snug, making small changes in your everyday eating can shed unwanted winter weight. This month’s Nutrition Connection provides you with a couple tips to get you started and “spring clean” your diet!

Cut out Processed Carbs from ONE (or more) Meals

Processed carbs like bread, pasta, pretzels, crackers, cereal, and chips, (the list goes on) are foods that are easy to overeat, yet don’t offer much of a nutritional punch. Remove those foods from one (or more) meals, each day. As an example, swap out refined grains like **Special K cereal** and **toast** for **two hardboiled eggs** and a **bowl of fruit** for breakfast. At dinner, double up on the **vegetables** and leave off the **white rice or pasta**. Instead of **pretzels** for a salty snack, substitute **edamame** for a similar, yet satisfying and healthier snack. Keep your goal reasonable by addressing only one meal at a time, unless you feel you can tackle more than this.

Be Aware of and RE-WRITE your “Eating Scripts”

In Brian Wansink’s book, *Mindless Eating*, the food psychologist describes repetitive and unconscious eating patterns as “eating scripts.” An example of an eating script might be the bowl of ice cream you always serve yourself after dinner while you wind down watching TV. Another common script is raiding the pantry as soon as you get home from work while prepping dinner.

What are *your* “eating scripts?” How can you re-write that script to help you eat less or eat better and bring more mindfulness to eating? Re-writing the above mentioned scripts would look like this:

1. Enlist your spouse for an after dinner walk 2-3 nights a week instead of sitting down to the TV. (*notice I didn’t say every night...start small*)
2. Pack a satisfying snack to eat on the way home from work. It will take the edge off of your hunger and stop that post work pantry raid.

Add in More Green

Dieting is often associated with “removing” foods from our diet, but lets change that mindset and “add-in” something healthy. Coloring your plate with a bit of green at every meal ensures not only a plate-full of nutritious additions, but can also facilitate weight loss. Packed with water

and fiber, green vegetables are low in calories. As an example, 1 cup of sliced zucchini = 25 calories compared to 200 calories = 1 cup of pasta. Here are several simple meal ideas to add in green!

Breakfast: Add **spinach** or **arugula** to eggs; add a handful of **spinach** to a fruit smoothie

Snacks: Substitute [Kale Chips](#) for potato chips; dip **raw sugar snap peas** into hummus

Lunch: Toss sliced **cucumbers** in a 2 Tbsp. balsamic vinegar, 1 Tbsp. olive oil and 1 tsp. of honey for a simple salad side dish

Dinner: Add finely chopped **kale** or **Swiss chard** to tomato sauce; vary up your typical dinner salad with the **spinach salad** recipe below!

Fennel and Spinach Salad with Shrimp and Balsamic Vinaigrette

YIELD: Serves 4 (serving size: about 3 1/2 cups)

TOTAL: 18 Minutes

Ingredients

- 2 slices prosciutto or bacon
- 1 pound jumbo shrimp, peeled and deveined
- 2 cups thinly sliced fennel bulb (about 1 medium bulb)
- 1 cup grape tomatoes, halved
- 1/2 cup thinly sliced red onion
- 1 (9-ounce) package fresh baby spinach
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped shallots
- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper



Preparation

1. Cook prosciutto/bacon in a skillet over medium heat until crisp. Remove bacon from pan, reserving drippings, and crumble. Add the shrimp to pan, and cook 2 minutes, turning once.
2. Combine bacon, 2 cups fennel, grape tomatoes, red onion, and baby spinach in a bowl. Combine the remaining ingredients in a small bowl, stirring with a whisk. Add the shrimp and balsamic mixture to spinach mixture; toss well.

Nutritional Information

Amount per serving

Calories: 274; Fat: 13.5g; Saturated fat: 2.2g; Mono fat: 7.7g; Poly fat: 1.9g
Protein: 27.5g; Carbohydrate: 11.2g; Fiber: 3.5g

For more information regarding eating healthy and other nutrition topics, please contact

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